

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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Anniversary of Alex Flores

WOMEN WORKERS LEAD ANTIRACIST MOVEMENT



LOS ANGELES, November 30—"We all want justice for these families. That's why we are here. But if we are honest, and this is a hard conversation to have especially with the families who lost loved ones, real justice can only come when we overthrow capitalism!"

This speech was also the overwhelming sentiment of the 75 people, including five other families who lost loved ones to racist killer cops, who came to Newton police station tonight. We commemorated the life of Alex Flores, who was murdered by the racist LAPD November 19, 2019.

This militancy was echoed in the speeches

of two different sisters whose loved ones were murdered by police. Both of these working-class women have been leaders and organizers in this campaign and respect the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) and our ideas. Through the last year of fight back, we have fought for everyone involved in this intense struggle to see the need for a party and a communist world.

Women lead militant fightback

The sister of Cesar Rodriguez, who has been fighting for over three years since her brother was murdered by Long Beach kkkops, referenced the

comrade's speech and acknowledged that this is a lifelong battle for her and won't end until we have a new system. The sister of Alex Flores also gave a militant speech on the need to overthrow capitalism. She thanked PLP and said, although her family has painfully lost their family member, her family has also gained many new members, referring to PLP and she then asked the crowd to join us.

As Los Angeles is entering its third Covid-19 surge, there are countless ways that capitalism brutalizes our class. While the focus of the last

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OUR FIGHT

- ★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.
- ★The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.
- ★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.
- ★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.
- ★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.
- ★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.
- ★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.
- ★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.
- ★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.
- ★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com

Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202

Internet
www.plp.org

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram:
@PLPchallenge

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP’s criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual’s writing of an article.

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Editorial

Asian Trade Deal: Prelude to war?

On November 15, China signed the world’s largest “free” trade agreement with 14 other Asia-Pacific nations. Beyond reducing tariffs and easing barriers to capitalist investments, the trade deal represents a giant step toward fascism and global war between China and its imperialist arch-rival, the U.S.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) “covers almost one-third of the world’s population and about one-third of its gross domestic product” (South China Morning Post, 12/1). The new alliance includes all 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, China’s top trading partner. It also draws four traditionally U.S.-leaning countries more deeply into China’s orbit: Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. By strengthening ties with its neighbors, China will be less vulnerable to U.S. sanctions. Along with the Belt and Road Initiative, the gigantic Chinese infrastructure project of trains, roads, and gas and oil pipelines, the RCEP gives China tremendous leverage over poorer debtor capitalist bosses.

According to a commentary published by Renmin University’s school of international studies, the deal is China’s biggest win in economic diplomacy since the formation of the Beijing-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in 2016:

[It] displays that China’s economic cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries will be substantially strengthened, and significantly counter the numerous pressures from the China-US economic decoupling and changes in supply chains...” (SCMP, 11/20).

China’s rise has been relentless. In 2009, it surpassed Germany as the world’s largest exporting nation. This October, the International Monetary Fund acknowledged that China had overtaken the U.S. as the world’s largest economy (EurAsian Times, 10/18). Despite mostly empty threats from President Donald Trump, China’s annual trade surplus with the U.S. still tops \$450 billion (focus-economics.com, 10/13). It’s the only major economy that has kept growing through the pandemic.

The RCEP may herald a tipping point, the moment when China supplants the U.S. as the world’s most powerful imperialist. Unlike the Trans Pacific Partnership, which Trump withdrew from in 2017, the RCEP plays to China’s strengths and will go by China’s rules. The pact has minimal labor standards, no environmental regulations, and no constraints on state-subsidized industries—all of which would have favored the U.S. rulers at the Chinese bosses’ expense.

What does this mean for the international working class? First of all, “free” trade is a cynical misnomer. As we saw with NAFTA in North America, it’s designed to give the bosses flexibility to move their companies, technologies, and merchandise freely across borders. Meanwhile, workers are free to be used as cheap labor—or, when the winds of profit blow the wrong way, free to starve.

Second, the looming change in the imperialists’ pecking order will make the world an even more volatile place. As the RCEP sharpens the contradictions between China and the U.S., it brings both countries that much closer to World War III. In the face of this development, workers of the world must reject the bosses’ calls to nationalism. Our task is to build the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party and smash capitalism and its enslaving economic system for all time.

U.S. bosses’ split: another win for China

Trump has represented the isolationist bosses who make most of their profits within the U.S. They have more to lose than to gain from multilateral trade deals that bring in added competition to the U.S. market. But for the top-dog finance capital wing of the U.S. ruling class, which makes much of its money internationally, Trump’s high-tariff, go-it-alone trade policy is a disaster, both for short-term profits and long-term geopolitical control.

The task of future Stooage in Chief Joe Biden is to revive the old order and put the liberal bosses back in charge. He’s probably doomed. For one thing, China’s unified ruling class and full-blown fascism gives them a huge strategic advantage. For another, the domestic U.S. bosses have hijacked the Republican Party and are likely to keep running the U.S. Senate, which must ratify any trade agreements.

At bottom, the division in the U.S. ruling class is over the best way to handle China and its threat to U.S. profits. Trump’s Fortress America wing would rely on a defensive, scaled-down, predominantly white military that could wage genocide on the cheap. Biden’s interventionist wing is targeting Black and Latin youth to build a massive, multicultural, patriotic fighting force ready to lay down their lives by the millions.

Turn the guns around!

On November 24, a high-ranking Chinese official was published in the Op Ed section of the New York Times, finance capital’s daily mouthpiece. Fu Ying, an ex-vice foreign minister, called for a new era of “co-opetition” between China and the U.S., a “mutually beneficial” mix of cooperation and competition. But when you read the fine print, it didn’t sound so friendly: “On the political front, it is high time that the United States drop its habit of interfering in other countries’ internal affairs....and avoid challenging China on the issue of Taiwan or by meddling in the territorial disputes of the South China Sea.” In other words, China will be happy to work with the U.S.—as long as the U.S. surrenders Asia.

While imperialists may cooperate in narrow and short-lived ways when it serves their interests, competition is always primary. The bosses live by the law of maximum profit.

The U.S. finance capitalists will never voluntarily accept China’s ascent to become the world’s new number-one power—there are too many trillions in multinational profits at stake. They may lose, but they won’t go gently.

For the same reason, the Chinese bosses will stop at nothing to reign supreme. China’s true intentions were revealed in a recent message from President Xi Jinping to the People’s Liberation Army Marine Corps: “Put all your minds and energy on preparing for war” (cnn.com, 10/14).

The instability of this period is a great danger to the working class, but also an opportunity. Though we cannot say when, where, or how the bosses will take up arms, it is our historic responsibility to transform imperialist war into war for communist revolution. We have no side in this fight between exploiters. Workers of the world, we cannot forget that our class seized state power in Russia during World War I, and did the same in China after World War II. Though these revolutions were a great advance for the working class, they ultimately failed to make a lasting break with capitalism. But history tells us we will have another chance—if we build for it today. Fight for communism! Join PLP!☛

Shut down capitalists, not hospitals

Hospital bosses have no mercy for working-class patients



CHICAGO, November 24—Over 35 multiracial workers and community members braved the wind and the rain today to protest the bosses' racist proposal to close Mercy Hospital. Members of the communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) spread revolutionary politics to help build the struggle against this racist attack. While distributing CHALLENGE and making conversation with workers, PLP asserted that a health industry under capitalism will always sacrifice workers' lives for profit.

Workers around the world are facing another deadly surge in coronavirus cases, with thousands dying daily. Despite this, the billion-dollar Trinity Health system is looking to shut down this safety-net hospital whose patients are 72 percent Black and Latin.

We shouldn't be surprised that the racist and sexist bosses want to close a hospital during a pandemic; they choose their profits over workers' lives every day. That's the logic of capitalism. But we should be angry over these attacks and organize a mass, militant fightback.

The international PLP is committed not just to keeping Mercy Hospital open, but building a communist revolution to destroy this racist capitalist system that has no regard for our lives. We fight for a world where workers run society collectively in our own interests, and where pandemics, racist police terror, unemployment and evictions are relics of the past.

We are who we need!

What had been promoted as a rally and car caravan by various unions was little more

than a press conference. Religious leaders and politicians blew a lot of hot air for the media under a protected canopy while workers huddled in the rain.

Lifelong misleader Jesse Jackson Sr never one to refuse a photo opportunity – gave his standard hollow speech, then jumped in his truck to drive away. Likely he didn't want to be called out on his opportunism, like when antiracist rebels in Ferguson, Missouri ran him out of town after he tried to quash the fightback there! As workers we must not be blinded by the bosses' manipulation of identity politics and race. A Black manager of oppression is still a manager of oppression.

While the misleaders babbled on, PLP members talked with other workers about keeping Mercy open. We distributed copies of CHALLENGE newspaper, along with a Party flyer specifically about Mercy and the pandemic.

Workers agreed that the fight needed to grow, not just to include more healthcare workers, but also other workers and students. Many agreed that an attack on any worker is an attack on all workers.

Those of us in PLP here have been organizing to make this a bigger campaign in our other mass organizations and workplaces. We have given speeches, gotten signatures for petitions, and testified at the state review board that ultimately will decide whether the hospital can close.

We build this fight because ultimately it's the masses of workers and students that move society forward, not politicians. Throughout this pandemic, it's been the workers in hospi-

Why do we need to accept living under these capitalist bosses' awful system when we have the ability and interest to run a far better society on our own?

tals, transport, and other industries who have saved workers' lives and kept society from collapsing. Why do we need to accept living under these capitalist bosses' awful system when we clearly have the interest and ability to run a far better society on our own?

Capitalist "healthcare" will never meet workers' needs

Right on Trinity Health website's main page, there's a link to a video where CEO Mike Slubowski states, "eliminating racism is essential to our Mission." Meanwhile, his company threatens to close a hospital in a city where the majority of Covid-19 deaths have been Black and Latin workers.

In fact, the bosses have treated hospitals and clinics as places of profit for decades. This has led to a major reduction in overall hospital beds and staff (Truthout, 3/31). In mostly Black and Latin working-class neighborhoods and rural areas, hospitals were closing at a rate of almost 30 per year prior to the pandemic (Bloomberg, 8/21/18). The bosses' racist cost-cutting guaranteed that when disaster eventually struck, the system was overwhelmed and workers died unnecessarily.

Under capitalism, racist and sexist inequalities in workers' health prevail. Racist and sexist unemployment and toxic pollution lead to average life expectancies that are at least four years less for Black workers than white workers in the U.S. (The Balance, 3/8/19).

These racist inequalities serve as the tip of the spear to then attack and drag down the standard of health for all workers. They can only be fought by mass, multiracial, working-class unity, ultimately with the goal of crushing capitalism and replacing it with a communist society that's organized to put our needs first.

A revolutionary shot in the arm

As the pandemic rages on, the struggle over Mercy Hospital is critical. If we workers can keep it open, it'll be a shot in the arm to lead more class struggle to improve all workers' lives. And as communists in PLP, we can win more workers to understanding that this system will never serve our needs, and that it will take a revolution to create one that will. Save Mercy Hospital! Join PLP!🔥

Colombia: for Javier, shut this racist system down!

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA, December 2—The brutal murder-by-cop of Javier Ordoñez was the last straw. The video of their initial interaction, which was widely shared on social media, shows Javier Ordoñez pleading "please, no more" as cops repeatedly electrocuted him with a stun gun. He later died of head injuries while in police custody.

Outraged youth attacked the police and the CAI (Immediate Attention Command), and destroyed everything in their path, in various sectors of the city, some took the opportunity to loot, vandalize, and destroy. The police shot indiscriminately, killing 11 civilians in the capital Bogotá and three in Soacha and in other cities in the country. Not unlike the protests following the murder of George Floyd in the U.S., the rebellion spread throughout the nation here.

In Colombia, a corrupt paramilitary narco political class has governed for more than 60 years, where all kinds of atrocities are committed by the rulers and the bourgeois class. Everything goes unpunished and is getting worse every day. Capitalism is in crisis and is not capable of solving the minimum basic conditions for the survival of the working class. To maintain itself, capitalism uses all its vicious tools, typical of the system: sexism, racism, individualism, persecution, imprisonment, murder, etc. These conditions for our class in Colombia and in the world are terribly similar.

The U.S. is the champion of racism, individualism, sexism, persecution, torture, imprisonment, murder among other barbarities, especially against Black, immigrant, and Latin workers throughout its history. Lately, we have seen the frequent killings of many Black workers by the police going unpunished by the state. The Colombian police, reproducing the same patterns of behavior of the U.S. bosses, are systematically applying brute force, torture, massacres, and disappearances of all kinds of leaders and of young people in many parts of the country. The government of President Iván Duque is a faithful student of the former president, former Senator Álvaro Uribe Vélez, a pioneer of all barbarities known to all for many decades. Uribe has yet to pay for any of his murderous crimes against the working class.

The police are professionals in the art of infiltrating protests. They use many of their members to unleash chaos and to delegitimize any lawful action, so the state can prosecute. This is how high-ranking police officers speak of the connection of young people with groups outside the law such as the ELN (urban guerrillas), the FARC (rural guerrillas). These cops are laying a smoke screen to unleash the persecution and prosecution against these young fighters. The "indignant" mayor of Bogotá and the general population ask for reforms to the police. Then the defense minister and the con-

gress, to appease the growing anger, agree to endlessly debate the matter.

Indigenous workers mobilized against the massacres, and on Tuesday the workers' union confederations, teachers, students, and social groups also mobilized in various parts of the country, for possible labor and pension reform, among other demands.

The events of September 9, the day of Javier's murder, which occurred after the death of Javier Ordoñez, were not prepared, organized, well thought, but rather occurred out of indignation, repudiation, and spontaneity. Spontaneity, a phenomenon that is not subject to any preparation or direction, is driven by reacting to heat of the moment and circumstances. Spontaneity does not give time to think, to discuss: is it anti-Marxist and anti-dialectical? Thus it can lead to political mistakes.

The Progressive Labor Party does not bet on this type of phenomenon that does not have any political and ideological sharpness, that has no future. Everything that is not prepared in advance, that is not subject to analysis, to discussion, will be doomed to failure, and this is what happened. To advance the working class must carefully prepare its political acts.☸

Anniversary of Alex Flores

Women workers lead antiracist movement



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straight 52 Friday nights has been how the police enforce the oppression of our class, we have fought for all involved to take a broader look at the roots of our oppression.

Saluting one year of antiracist, antisexist fightback

This struggle has had militant, antisexist women leadership since Alex's racist murder became a mass issue one year ago. Anti-racist marches with family, other antiracists and PL'ers have blocked streets and intersections and chanted while shutting down the entrance of the kkkops' "Shootin' Newton" station.

Women political leaders from Alex's family have been a key force not only in leading chants and marches, but also in being receptive to expanding the antiracist fightback.

With fellow Black working class sisters and brothers gunned down by racist killer kkkops in this racist capitalist system; a system that only offers our class fascism through racist police terror,

racist unemployment, and deadlier imperialist wars and genocide.

BLM misleaders collaborate with kkkops

Just over a week prior, the local Black Lives Matter (BLM) chapter organized a "victory" meeting with newly elected LA County District Attorney Gascon to "manage family expectations." The sister of Cesar Rodriguez found out about it and let us know, as well as a half dozen other families who have been ardent supporters of BLM and yet weren't invited to this meeting. The families were pissed. In this meeting the true colors of both BLM and DA Gascon were shown as many families left furious knowing that their cases would not even be reviewed.

La lucha continua!

At rallies like this one now, when asked "Can there be a good DA [District Attorney] in a racist system? Can there be a good politician in a racist system?" the crowd emphatically responds "NO!" This is a potential sign of the times— masses of workers are open to communist ideas, to militant

antiracist fightback, to a solution to this capitalist system that murders our working class sisters and brothers and crushes whole countries into hells-capes through sharpening imperialist rivalry.

We are building a fighting PLP by continuing to expose the reformists and their scams like voting. We have made local political connections to the racism and sexism of capitalism as it manifests in surging Covid-19 rates, hospital closings, underfunded schools, unemployment, and the exploding rates of houselessness.

We still have a long way to go to develop the necessary class consciousness and confidence in our class to turn all these workers into revolutionary communists.

But waging these anti-racist struggles, making these bigger connections, and a deepening commitment to basebuilding is positioning us for longer-term struggle connecting over a dozen families, our on-the-job work, and our mass organization work. Our night may seem dark for now, but our future couldn't be brighter. The struggle continues, and there's no better time to join the fight with PLP than now. ☸

Homeless workers displaced again

Trash the bosses and their courts

NEW YORK CITY, November 29—About 80 protesters in the Upper West Side opposed Mayor Bill de Blasio’s plan to forcibly relocate workers from The Lucerne (hotel-turned-men’s shelter) to the financial district. Out of this struggle, workers and Progressive Labor Party members are learning two things: the potential power of working-class unity and the inability of this system to provide housing for all.

We demanded that the 5,500 homeless people currently in unsafe crowded shelters be placed in the empty hotel rooms for the duration of the pandemic. Today’s action came three days after we distributed hundreds of Thanksgiving meals to our Lucerne brothers, and four days after losing the legal battle. When the City sought to relocate workers, they sued the City to block the relocation. On November 25, Manhattan Supreme Court Judge

Debra James ruled in favor of the relocation, paving the way for the forcible eviction of the nearly 200 homeless men from the hotel.

Displaced by the profit motive

The rising homeless numbers in NY State and the U.S. parallel the 70 million displaced refugees around the world. It is a sure sign that the racist profit system can never meet the needs of the international working class. And the enthusiastic support for the men at the Lucerne by people on the Upper West Side reflects that if given the chance, people give what they can to create a more equal and egalitarian world.

But such a world is impossible under capitalism, a system based on racist and sexist exploitation of the working class, rising inequality and wars for profit. Where there is profit, there is exploitation and where there

is exploitation, there is no equality. We need communism where the many skills of the working class are harnessed and organized to meet people’s needs and potential. Out of this month’s long campaign, we are slowly building friendships that will build the Progressive Labor Party and the movement for communist revolution.

As one of the leaders of this struggle said after the NY State Supreme Court ruled against the Lucerne residents, “We won whether the City admits it or not because... the [Dept. of Homeless services] has been served notice. If you violate our humanity, we will fight you... we will keep fighting until we beat you, and until your broken system is replaced.”

This capitalist system in crisis has nothing to offer our class. Join the Progressive Labor Party and help us fight for a better world.☺

Mohawk Update

No such thing as a neutral state

They shouldn’t be sending police officers with 20-30 allegations of police brutality to... protests when they’ve already been accused, in the double-digits...That’s just unsettling. In the food industry, if I got alleged of messing up food in the kitchen more than twice, I wouldn’t have a job.

– Antiracist fighter

CHICAGO, December 2—We are currently seeing workers fight back by cooperating in a mass way to take on the racist capitalist bosses. Members of the international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) are helping build a citywide antiracist support network, because the only defense we can count on is a unified and fighting working class.

We’re seeing more organizations come together to fight against the system. The newly-created Chicago Protester Defense Committee looks to unify different organizations and initiatives within Chicago so that we can all come together as a united front from below. Some of our efforts include raising funds to help those arrested make bail, supply and food drives for unhoused workers, building social media campaigns, and arranging legal representation.

We want to fight in defense of our fellow workers, specifically those facing felony charges and racist and sexist violence while protesting against the state terror committed by Mayor Lori Lightcop and her gang, the Chicago Police Department (CPD). The goal is to meet regularly and put in the collective work in order to advance the protection



and strength of our class. As the capitalists increase their racist and sexist attacks on us and get closer to war with China and/or Russia, we will need a strengthened working class to build a revolutionary, communist movement to get rid of these parasites once and for all.

Bring the antiracist fight

Throughout most of this year we’ve been reminded just how vicious and ruthless the kkkops can be when the bosses’ power is threatened. We’ve seen them smash cameras, phones, and eyeglasses, confiscate bikes and backpacks, and regularly call protestors by racist and sexist names. These racist thugs often turn these encounters into violent situations for the protestors through taunts, shoves, and pushes which quickly turn into brutal hits with batons, strikes to the head, kicking and dragging protestors through the streets, even sometimes using chemical agents.

On November 19, there was a lawsuit filed against the city bosses on behalf of 60 people who joined protests over this summer. They were fighting to bring national attention against the racist murder of Black workers like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade. The 17-count suit alleges violations of protestors’ so-called “constitutional” rights and names Chicago Police Superintendent David Brown, along with 20 officers (USA Today, 11/19).

From the end of May to early June, there were at least 3,000 arrests in Chicago alone (BlockClub Chicago, 6/9). Many arrests have turned into felony

charges, including federal cases. The cops have targeted antiracist fighters such as Mohawk Johnson, a Black artist/activist who was arrested at a protest in August and remains on house arrest with eight aggravated assault charges. The bosses try to make an example out of our class sisters and brothers, instilling fear into the rest of us so that we’re hesitant to fight against their state violence.

This is by no means limited to the United States. The bosses in France recently tried to ram through a new law that would criminalize workers for filming cops. Thankfully, workers and students there fought back in the streets and on the job and the bosses were forced to back down (Reuters, 11/30).

The state is never neutral fight for communism

In the class struggle between the working class and the capitalists, we must never expect the courts and cops to be neutral. They all serve the role of defending and upholding this racist and sexist capitalist state. The bosses’ whole apparatus of “law and order” above all protects property and profits, over workers’ lives.

Those of us in PLP are ready to fight to build this defense network, as it is through the mass movement that we grasp our power to protect ourselves as a class. But ultimately, our collective liberation and justice will only be served when we build a mass Party capable of crushing this capitalist system and replacing it with a worker-led communist one.☺

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Jacob Lawrence review: art is a weapon

I was glad to see the review of artist Jacob Lawrence's exhibit at the Met Museum in the December 2 issue of CHALLENGE. The content of his work is very meaningful to the class struggle and the fight against systemic racism. In some respects, however, painterly mechanisms in his and other artists' work can be seen to have influences brought about by an affinity to artistic movements alien to working-class culture.

The article correctly calls Lawrence's art social realism. In 1917, when workers took power in the Soviet Union, this was a powerful force. For painting it was characterized by an accurate, emotive style, influenced by late-nineteenth century Russian realism and European naturalism, that put a positive light on communism. But quasi-expressionism was often mixed with themes of protest. This was more true in the West. Later, in the '20s and '30s, after Lenin's death, socialist realism, as it became known, was the official style for Soviet painters. This soon became the target of the capitalists, who criticized its "rigorously optimistic" depictions. Late socialist realism came about with the advent of full-blown revisionism.

With fellow Black painter Charles White, and to some extent with Lawrence as well, there is definite anatomical distortion, notably White's enlargement of workers' strong hands, although the preponderance of White's work has no appreciable distortion. The en-

larged hands lend the work emphasis.

With Lawrence's painting, such as *We have no property!*, pictured in the review, Black soldiers of the U.S. Revolutionary War of the eighteenth century display swords and bayonets with arms lengthened and hands widened to give the scene an immediate militancy.

In addition, especially with White, enigmatic, abstract symbols appear in many paintings, putting the unaware viewer at a distance. The burden of such symbolism and that of expressionist distortion in general are often influences from bourgeois art which seep in and would eventually blunt the arts.

In Talks At the Yenan Forum On Literature And Art, Mao Tsetung made the point that "Great art works of the past are not a source but a stream." Many beautiful Soviet works of art and those sparking the Chinese Cultural Revolution, or those from Vietnam, are working-class beacons and examples from our recent past. Social realism can be honed and made into an even sharper weapon for the workers' struggle.

★★★★★

Colombia's bosses: predatory political parties

Colombian President Belisario Betancur, in 1982, declared a "peace" agreement with M19, Union Patriótica (UP) and other guerrilla groups. This political

move gave rise to new political parties which entered the electoral process throughout the country, including the presidency. The scared ruling class didn't hesitate and began killing the candidates and five members of Union Patriótica.

Today, history seems to repeat itself as many members of Colombia Humana, the party of the ex-candidate to the senate Gustavo Petro, have been killed. Many others have been threatened by the extreme right-wing group with the pseudonym "Castro-Chavismo". This group is well known. Even Donald Trump has mentioned it, calling them socialists. They are not. But that has not stopped the attacks from the right wing. They are trying to scare voters in a dirty campaign for the presidency here in 2022.

The working class believes and participates in "democracy" because they do not have the tools of scientific analysis of dialectical materialism. They believe in all the false promises. We know that the working class, without an organization, without a political party, will continue to follow its predator.

That is why we, in Progressive Labor Party, have to work hard to create class consciousness among the working class. Our historic task is to take power from these parasites and destroy the capitalist class with a communist revolution.

★★★★★

Red memoir

A life of labor and love

In *A Life of Labor and Love: A Red Memoir*, Wally Linder reminds us of both the power of a united working class to fight the capitalist bosses, and of the special people that make up our class. He interweaves the political and the personal as he chronicles his 89 years of life. He shares the joys and the tragedies, and we get a glimpse of the heart and soul of this ordinary but extraordinary man.

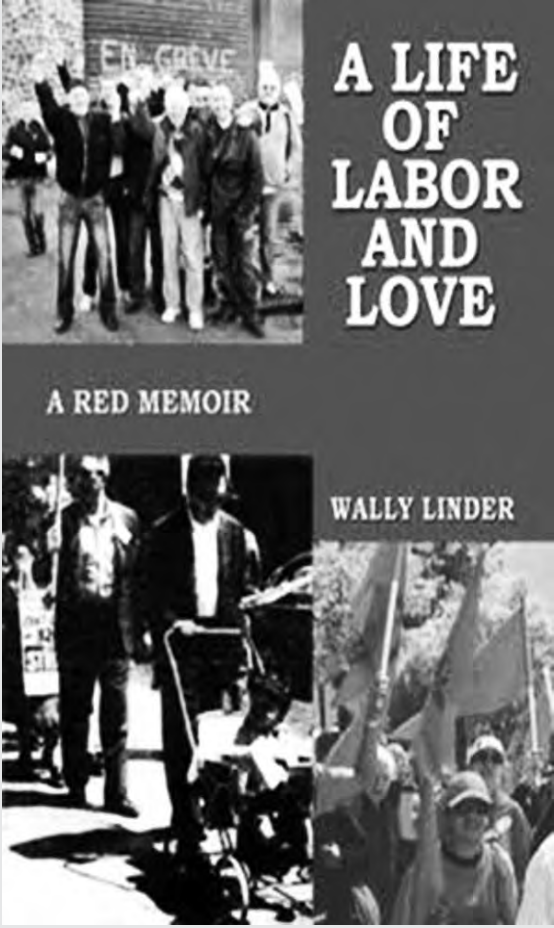
Born in 1930, Wally grew up as a New York working-class kid who loved baseball and was curious about the world. At 19, he participated in a strike at City College against two racist, anti-Semitic professors. At 23, he supported the Rosenbergs, two communists who were falsely accused of giving atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. He later helped "shut down the waterfront" by organizing teamsters and railroad workers to respect tugboat workers' very sparse picket lines (600 workers had to cover hundreds of stations). We learn not only about these militant actions, but also about the people in Wally's life.

Multi-racial unity strengthens 1960s transit workers

In the early 1960s, the railroad workers unions were still racially segregated, but Wally had been working to bring the two unions together since he first became a steward in the late 1950s. Wally was a Communist Party (CP) member when he started working on the railroad, but would soon join a dissident group—which later became Progressive Labor Party (PLP)—organized around militancy and open advocacy of communism. PLP's approach was in contrast to that of the CP, which, in response to the McCarthy witch hunts, hid their politics and blended in with activist liberals.

As a member of the Brotherhood Railway Clerks and Freight Handlers, the first thing Wally did was to develop relationships among stewards from both the two racially divided unions. This laid the basis for suggesting that both Black and white stewards represent any

worker brought up on disciplinary charges.



Their unity allowed for a stronger defense for every worker and as the union kept winning cases, the bosses stopped disciplining so many workers. These victories built support for the idea of one local with multi-racial leadership. The CP's position had been that members should tell no one that they were communists. Wally discovered, however, that all the workers knew that he and his 65 other comrades working on the railroad were CP members. The FBI told the union leaders, and the union leaders told the workers.

In 1963, when the railroad laid off all its unionized workers, Wally, now a member of PLP, organized a multiracial Railroad Workers

Unemployment Council. He inspired many with his fighting spirit, his antiracism, and his communist politics, which he no longer kept "secret".

The personal is political

Throughout the book, we meet the people Wally loved. We learn about his first wife, Esther, the mother of his two children Anita and Andrew. Like many women, Esther was Wally's rock. When he feared getting fired for his railroad organizing and not having a job, Esther said, "So, you'll get another one". Esther was friends with Stokely Carmichael, loved to dance and go camping, and was a mother figure to many. She was also an active member of PLP, and was out with a group of her comrades selling the Party's newspaper, CHALLENGE, when she was tragically struck by a car and killed in 1983.

Wally's good friend Gus is someone else we meet in this book. Gus worked at a wholesale shoe market, but was so much more than what some might assume from his occupation. Gus was an accomplished cook, carpenter, gardener, fisherman, creator of ceramics and stained glass, voracious reader, world traveler, and a loving husband and father. Wally's several stories about Gus are a delight and reminder that people are so much more interesting than the stereotypes we might develop of them.

Wally has led an amazing life, and continues to do so! We learn many details about this fascinating person, the historical periods he's lived through and helped influence, the people in his life who have loved and been loved by him, and the joys and tragedies of his 89 years of life. This book is highly recommended, especially for those participating in today's antiracist movements and for those wanting to learn about what it means to be a communist.

Email desafio.challenge@gmail.com for a copy.

Biden’s Cabinet

Faces of Liberal Fascism

Continued from page 8

cash and left millions to languish in a ‘jobless recovery.’ Expect her to continue Trump-style stimulus bribes to pacify workers while the pandemic rages and to attack Social Security and Medicare, as she has advocated since 2012 (HuffPost, 9/13; NYT, 12/1).

Jake Sullivan, National Security Adviser: This Obama-Era top aide to Hillary Clinton has recently dedicated himself to formulating “U.S. Foreign Policy for the Middle Class: A Perspective from Nebraska” a Carnegie Endowment study which seeks to solve the problem of re-energizing mass support for the U.S. military (NYT, 11/22).

Avril Haines, first woman Director of National Intelligence: Architect of Obama-era drone bombing program that has killed untold numbers of non-combatants across the Middle East and Africa.

Alejandro Mayorkas, first Latin Director of Homeland Security: Author of the Obama-era DACA program whose false promises drew millions of undocumented youth into providing personal information in the hopes of legal residency. Oversaw the construction of an archipelago of detention centers as Obama’s deputy and innovator in implementation of family separation (vox.com, 6/14). Right-hand man to Deportee-in-Chief Obama as deputy-secretary of Department of Homeland security. Pocket-Lining warmakers line up to join Jim Crow

Joe

Pocket-Lining warmakers line up to join Jim Crow Joe

Biden’s repeated promises to restore U.S. leadership are backed up by a phalanx of money-grubbing Democratic Party operatives who alternate between government jobs and lucrative positions at defense-industry investment and lobbying firms like WestExec and Pine Island Capital. Past Democratic power brokers like Tom Daschle and Dick Gephardt rub elbows with up-and-coming Biden picks like Anthony Blinken and Avril Haines and enrich themselves at the heart of the U.S. imperialist war machine (NYT, 11/28). Michele Flournoy, front-runner to become the first-ever woman Secretary of Defense, earned compensation of \$440,000 in 2018 and 2019 from Booz Allen Hamilton, engineering consultants to U.S. imperialism.

This kind of brazen double-dealing at the heart of the empire is an outrage to workers and Trump was able to mobilize his base to propel him to the White House because Hillary Clinton represented more of the same.

Identity politics: different faces, same crime

Racist attacks were embodied by Obama himself, who commanded his Black-manager-led Justice Department to do nothing to punish the kkkops who strangled Eric Garner and shot Michael

Brown. If the wave of Black and Latin mayors who were put in charge during the racist decay and gentrification of U.S. cities since the 1970s were not enough to convince you, Obama himself is the best lesson of what “Black faces in high places” gets us under capitalism - Black-led racism.

The same goes for sexism. The rulers use women as the faces to deliver on sexist policies. Now-disgraced Bill Clinton picked the first ever woman Secretary of State in Madeleine Albright, who famously declared that the deaths of 500,000 children (half of whom were girls) in U.S. imperialism’s 1990s-era bombing and sanctions campaign against Iraq was “worth the price.” In the same role under Obama, Hillary Clinton was the face of a crumbling US-led world order, which sowed chaos across the Middle East. The ensuing refugee crisis is the largest since World War II—70 million by 2018 and has exposed untold millions of women to increased chances of physical and sexual assault (World Health Organization, 2018).

Workers and youth, looking for an example of multiracial and antisexist leadership, should not look to the rogues’ gallery of Biden’s cabinet. We must instead spark and join struggles against capitalism’s attacks on our class, from racist police murder to school budget cuts, layoffs and more. Class struggle means that we build new leadership from the ground up. We can guarantee victory of our anti-racist and anti-sexist struggles by keeping our eye on the prize: growth of the Progressive Labor Party today to lead communist revolution tomorrow.🔥



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Fascism spurs U.S. racist hate crimes

NYT, 11/17 — Hate crimes in the United States rose to their highest level in more than a decade last year, while more murders motivated by hate were recorded than ever before....

...In El Paso in August 2019...a 21-year-old gunman motivated by hatred toward Latinos...killed 23 people and injured many more....2018’s deadliest hate-motivated attack [was] the mass shooting targeting Jews at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Over all,...7,314 criminal incidents [were] motivated by bias toward race or ethnicity or gender identity in 2019.... FBI data likely undercounts the number of hate crimes...because...local agencies are not required to report hate crime data....Last year only 2,172 agencies reported hate crime data...out of...more than 15,000 law enforcement agencies.... (Notable omissions...included the death of a protester in 2017 during a rally of white supremacists in Charlottesville, Va.)

...The FBI’s annual report vastly understates the real level of hate crimes...the Southern Poverty Law Center...said....The SPLC noted that the rise in hate crimes...has come as...white supremacist groups have surged.... [They] grew 55 percent between 2017 and 2019.

The upswing in hate crimes...underscored the upward trend...during the Trump era, and the harsh rhetoric against Latino immigrants....The day-to-day ticks of hate crimes shows...increases after sustained and fervent remarks by the president....“Blacks are still the No. 1 target, at twice the level they represent in the American population,” the report [by Brian Levin, director of California State University’s Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism] said.

Communist-led demo in the Great Depression to win unemployment insurance

NYT, 11/22 — On Feb. 10, 1931,...tens of thousands of Americans nation-wide took to the streets at the height of the Great Depression to march for unemployment assistance and food aid. Organized by a then-burgeoning Communist Party, demonstrations...[fought in] tense confrontations with law enforcement. In Boston,... “Two hundred Communists...and about as many police staged a series of fights...along the Boston Common.” [NY Times] In St. Paul, Minn., “Communist-led demonstra-

tors jammed their way into the House chambers of the Minnesota Legislature and held possession for more than two hours while they demanded relief for the unemployed.”

In New York City,... “nearly 4,000 men, women and children heard half a dozen speakers call... [for] unemployment insurance, [to] stop evictions and to furnish free food, heat and light to the unemployed.”

These demonstrations weren’t just for...unemployment insurance [Ed. Note: as well as for an 8-hour work-day and 40-hour week and for] assistance...for the sick and the old, and for new mothers, all financed by taxes on corporate income and inheritances.

With ongoing activism,...came greater support; rank-and-file pressure...led to the...AFL Trade Union Committee for Unemployment Insurance and Relief, headed by Louis Weinstock of the New York Painters Union, himself a Communist....From 1930 to 1935, and amalgam of leftists and laborers...made social insurance an urgent priority.

[Ed. Note: Unfortunately the Communists didn’t advance the reform fight to the goal of revolution; See PLP.org for “Revolution, Not Reform.”]

Australian commanders’ ‘bloodlust’ order slaughter of Afghans

NYT, 11/20 — ...The elite among Australian soldiers...in Afghanistan...waged a methodical campaign to kill helpless Afghans and cover it up.

Commanders ordered junior soldiers to execute prisoners so they could record their first “kill.” Adolescents, farmers, and other non-combatants were shot dead...outside the heat of battle. Superior officers created such a god-like [unquestioned] aura around themselves...even as 39 Afghans were unlawfully killed....Rules were broken, stories concocted, lies told, and prisoners killed....

...Trump recently pardoned three service members for war crimes [and] his administration has tried to block...an international investigator examining...war crimes.... This disregard for Afghan life...normalized murder and resulted in war crimes....Some [Australian] special forces members carried weapons...that could be planted on corpses to make them look like targets.

Retailers profit from pandemic, frontline Black & Latin women burdened most

NYT, 11/19 — ...Retailers are not sharing...profits they have earned during the pandemic with their workers, but are instead benefiting shareholders through stock buybacks. Amazon’s...quarterly profit has increased nearly 200 percent, ended its...pay raise for workers...[and] said no new hazard pay was planned.

Walmart...reported another big increase in quarterly sales...but...has not raised wages broadly as a way to reward workers during the pandemic.

The grocery chain Kroger’s...employees nationwide have staged protests...asking Kroger to reinstate the pay [raise], especially given its booming business sales....Lowe’s...expected to buy back about \$3 billion of its own stock in the fourth quarter, after spending about \$1 billion on buybacks and dividends in the third quarter.

“We ask workers with the least to sacrifice the most, and they are not even getting compensated in return,” said...the Brookings Institution....But the risks to retail workers...[include] spend[ing] hours inside, dealing with customers who may refuse to wear masks....A large part of the burden has fallen on female, Black and Hispanic employees, who make up a sizeable proportion of retail workers....108...grocery workers had died...[from] Covid-19 and...more than 16,300 had been infected or exposed to the virus.

Profit system’s ‘recovery’ in reverse, crippling 12 mill workers

NYT, 11/20 — The job market is weakening again, as more Americans file for unemployment benefits amid a sharp rise in coronavirus cases.... The latest data points to the fragility of the recovery [that]...has gone into reverse....

A new study...found that 7.3 million workers would lose their benefits with the end of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. An additional 4.6 million will be cut off from Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation....The programs represent “the last lifelines available to millions of Americans in desperate need,” said Andrew Stettner,...co-author of the study.... It will be a crippling end to one of our darkest years.”

Lower-paid service workers have been hit especially hard, and the rise in virus cases threatens new pain....Even for workers who have found new jobs...have had to settle for...a fraction of what they used to earn.

Biden's Cabinet

FACES OF
LIBERAL FASCISM

The United States president exercises government power on a day-to-day basis to keep the blood-sucking, war-making U.S. profit system running. This job requires a committee of people, a Cabinet, that assists the president with the constant oversight and adjustment of executive government activity: imperialist war, law enforcement, government finances, diplomacy, preserving capitalism, and more.

In analyzing the role of presidents and prime ministers of their day, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” In 1848 when capitalist classes in Europe were on the rise, they were relatively unified and focused on completing their drives to push monarchs from power and suppress early efforts of workers to organize fightback and revolution.

In 2020, Marx’s description fits the Chinese executive power under Xi Jinping, as rising Chinese capitalism prepares for world war to challenge declining U.S. imperialism (see editorial, page 2).

The U.S. ruling class, on the other hand, is fractured, contributing to the decline of U.S. capitalism’s world power in relation to a rising China. The Donald Trump presidency marked an acceleration of that decline as the “modern executive” was seized by a gang of open bandits with no loyalty to “the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.”

Compared to Trump’s team of outsiders, Biden’s crew is the ultimate collection of insiders and his choices in personnel point to an attempt to return to the smoothly-delivered imperialist and anti-worker policies of the Barack Obama era. Biden’s cynical and manipulative move to install the “most diverse cabinet ever” is a thin veil that seeks to cover the house of horrors the main imperialist wing of the U.S. ruling class has in store for workers everywhere.

The managers of an
empire in free fall

Joe Biden, President: He announced that military spending will expand, especially in the areas of cyberwarfare and AI (artificial intelligence) for a more mechanized and efficient surveillance and slaughter of our class overseas, combat roles for transgender workers, and updated equipment for the National Guard who is called in to suppress serious domestic rebellion (Stars and Stripes, 9/10). In 1988, Biden co-authored the infamous “100-to-1” law that targeted Black and Latin workers with mandatory 10-year sentences for possessing small amounts of crack cocaine. For nearly half a century, Biden has played a lead role in building racism, sexism, and war while serving the interests of finance capital. In 1994, he decried “predators on our streets” and led the charge for Bill Clinton’s Crime Bill, which doubled the U.S. prison population and caged generations of Black and Latin workers. Biden’s slogan sounded a lot like Trump: “Lock the SOB’s up!” (NYT, 6/25/19).



The cabinet of horrors:
faces of liberal fascism



Kamala Harris, first woman Vice President



Janet Yellen, first woman Treasury Secretary



Jake Sullivan, National Security Adviser



Alejandro Mayorkas, first Latin Director of Homeland Security



Avril Haines, first woman Director of National Intelligence



Antony Blinken, Secretary of State



Kamala Harris, first woman Vice President: In this period of growing fascism and approaching war Harris will continue the long and sordid tradition of Black-led racist assaults on Black workers and sexist assaults on women that are the hallmarks of liberalism. As district attorney in San Francisco and later as California’s state attorney general, Top Cop Kamala “fought tooth and nail to uphold wrongful convictions” (theguardian.com, 1/31/19). The cops’ racial profiling of Black workers flourished on her watch. As an attorney general, she criminalized parents of truant children, rather than giving them support..

Tony Blinken, Secretary of State: “...A job

in which he will try to coalesce skeptical international partners into a new competition with China, according to people close to the process” (NYT, 11/24). Blinken was Biden’s chief advisor when he cast his 2002 ballot in support of imperialist assault on Iraq as well as a vocal proponent in the Obama administration to launch war in Libya.

Janet Yellen, first woman Treasury Secretary: As Chair of the Federal Reserve under Obama, she crafted the 2008 bailouts and subsequent ‘quantitative easing’ that showered billionaires with

Continued from page 7

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